

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6358

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUDAPEST 2234

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, PDIP, HU

SUBJ: NEW HUNGARIAN AMBASSADOR TO MOSCOW DUE TO BE APPOINTED

1. EMBASSY HAS LEARNED FROM A HIGHLY RELIABLE SOURCE, WHO HAS INVARIABLY PROVIDED ACCURATE INFORMATION, THAT STATE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS JOZSEF MARJAI WILL SOON BE APPOINTED AMBASSADOR TO THE SOVIET UNION. PRIOR TO HIS APPOINTMENT, MARJAI IS SCHEDULED TO BE ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP IN THE HSWP CENTRAL COMMITTEE. THE DATE FOR THESE EVENTS WAS NOT OBTAINED.

2. A 53-YEAR-OLD CAREER DIPLOMAT, MARJAI WAS PROMOTED TO STATE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (NO. 2 FONOFF SLOT) IN DECEMBER 1973, AFTER HAVING SERVED AS DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS SINCE DECEMBER 1970. A PROTEGE OF THE HARD-LINE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FRIGYES PUJA, MARJAI HAS A REPUTATION AMONG WESTERN DIPLOMATS FOR ADDICTION TO CIRCUMLOCUTION AND IDEOLOGICAL RIGIDITY. HE JOINED THE FOREIGN MINISTER IN 1948 AND HIS EARLY ASSIGNMENTS INCLUDED TOURS OF DUTY IN PRAGUE, BELGRADE, MOSCOW AND BERN. HE HAS SERVED AS AMBASSADOR TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA (1959-63) AND YUGOSLAVIA (1966-70). MARJAI HAS BEEN MARRIED TWICE AND HAS TWO CHILDREN FROM EACH MARRIAGE. HE SPEAKS RUSSIAN, GERMAN AND SERBO-CROATIAN.

3. MARJAI HAS A WRY, ALMOST CYNICAL SENSE OF HUMOR. HE IS NOT A PARTICULARLY OUTGOING MAN AND WE RATHER SUSPECT THAT HIS REPUTATION FOR DOURNESS STEMS FROM THE FACT THAT IN THE PERIOD OF HIS FOREIGN OFFICE

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TOURS HIS DEALINGS WITH WESTERN DIPLOMATS HAVE NEARLY

ALWAYS BEEN ON CONTENTIOUS ISSUES. HE IS RESERVED, ALMOST SHY, BUT RATHER LEGALISTIC, DOCTRINAIRE AND CAREFUL. HE SAYS HIS RUSSIAN AND SERBO-CROATIAN HAVE DETERIORATED SOMEWHAT FROM LACK OF PRACTICE; THIS IS CERTAINLY TRUE OF HIS SERBO-CROATIAN. HE SAYS HE HAS A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF DZECH, SLOVENE AND UKRAINIAN. FOR WHAT IS WORTH, YUGOSLAV DIPLOMATS SAY HE WAS NOT PARTICULARLY WELL REGARDED WHILE IN BELGRADE.

4. MARJAI STRIKES US AS A RATHER TYPICAL OLD, HARD-LINE COMMUNIST DIPLOMAT WEDDED TO THE DIALECTIC AND MARXIAN CONCEPT OF HISTORY, QUALITIES NOT AT ALL SURPRISING IN A MINISTRY HEADED BY PUJA. THERE WAS SOME TALK EARLY LAST YEAR, PRIOR TO 11TH HSWP CONGRESS, THAT HE MIGHT BE ELECTED TO THE HSWP CC WITH PUJA ADVANCING TO THE POLITBURO. NEITHER MOVE TOOK PLACE. IT IS GOH PRACTICE, HOWEVER, TO HAVE ITS AMBASSADOR TO MOSCOW A MEMBER OF THE CC AS IS THE CASE WITH GYULA RAPAI. THUS, IF MARJAI IS ASSIGNED AS AMBASSADOR TO MOSCOW, AND WE IMAGINE HE WILL BE, HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO JOIN THE RANKS OF THE CC.
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